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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/701,195	11/04/2003	Paul Wilson	WILSP-03001	6241
28270	7590	12/13/2004	EXAMINER	
O'MALLEY AND FIRESTONE 919 SOUTH HARRISON STREET SUITE 210 FORT WAYNE, IN 46802			HURLEY, KEVIN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3611	

DATE MAILED: 12/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/701,195		WILSON, PAUL	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Kevin Hurley		3611	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5 and 15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 10-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3,4,7-9,13,14 and 16-19 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 04 November 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of the election of species in the reply filed on 1 October 2004 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that there is only one embodiment and that it is merely flipped over in orientation for different uses. This is not found persuasive because applicant has not shown that the disclosed species are not patentably distinct. The examiner does agree that the species shown in Figs. 5-9 should be grouped together.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

2. Claims 5 and 15 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on 1 October 2004.

Drawings

3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: 75. It appears that element 75 in Figures 1-3, 5, and 9 should be --74--.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any

amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stead et al.

Stead et al. discloses a tow bar assembly comprising a pivot joint having a first member 14 pivotally engaging a second member 12; first 30 and second 33 spring brackets being attached to one side of the pivot joint, the first spring bracket 30 attaching to the first member, and the second spring bracket 33 attaching to the second member; a spring 35 being located between the first and second spring brackets and attached thereof; and wherein the pivot joint pivots vertically; wherein the pivot joint further comprises pivot openings in the first and second members; and a pivot pin 16 extending through the pivot openings.

6. Claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Helgeson.

Helgeson discloses a tow bar assembly for a vehicle comprising: a first member 13 having a tongue; a second member 14 having a slot; a pivot joint having the slot pivotally engaging the tongue; a spring 32 attaching to the first member and the second member; and wherein the pivot joint pivots vertically; a bar 26 projecting transversely from the tongue, pivot openings in the tongue and the second member; and a pivot pin 17 extending through the pivot openings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stead et al. in view of Smith.

Stead et al. discloses the claimed invention except the spring is a mechanical spring instead of an air spring.

Stead et al., in col. 3 lines 50-52 discloses that other types of springs may be used.

Smith discloses, in col. 1 lines 30-42, that in order for a shock absorbing hitch to be adjustable for varying trailer loads, an air spring 44 can be used.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

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invention was made to modify Stead et al. by using an air spring, in view of Smith, so that the spring may be adjusted for varying trailer loads.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 3,4,7-9, 13-14, 16-19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

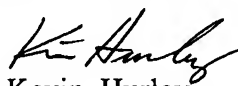
10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The cited references disclose biased trailer tow bar assemblies.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin Hurley whose telephone number is 703-308-0233. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris can be reached on 703-308-0629. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Kevin Hurley
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3611

December 8, 2004